

San Leandro Branch Libraries Master Plan

CHANGING COMMUNITY, CHANGING LIBRARY

FINAL REPORT
March 2002



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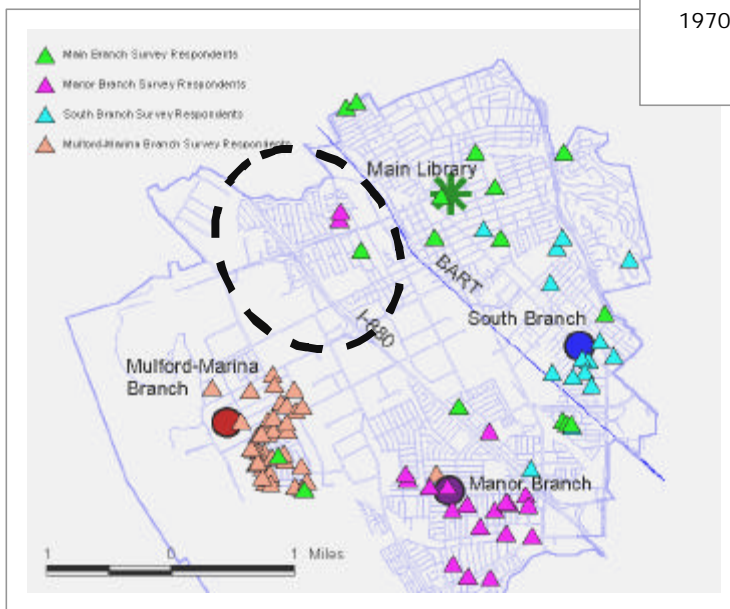
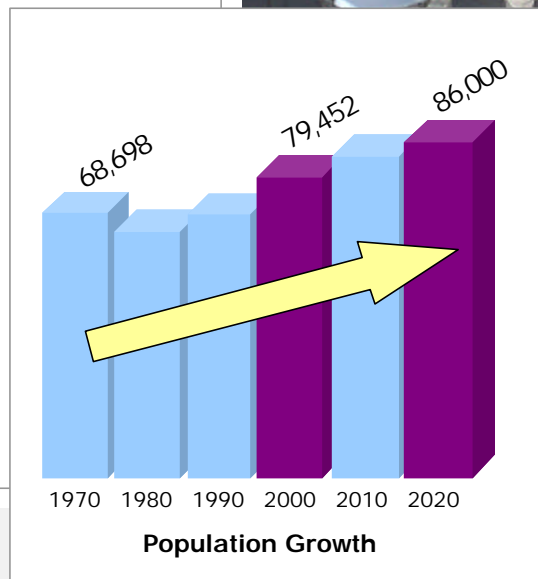
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San Leandro Branch Libraries Study

FINAL MASTER PLAN REPORT

Changing Community, Changing Library

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INTRODUCTION

The San Leandro Library: Serving the Community since 1906

The San Leandro Library has been providing library services to the residents of San Leandro for nearly a century. Beginning with the opening of the Carnegie Library Building in 1909, the San Leandro Library system has grown to include a newly renovated and expanded Main Library and three branch libraries, the Manor and Mulford-Marina Branches, which opened in 1962, and the South Branch, which opened in 1966.

In order to provide for San Leandro's growing population of nearly 80,000 people, the Library's collection has also expanded to nearly 140,000 items citywide, including both traditional library materials such as books and magazines as well as newer information formats like CD-ROM databases, video cassettes, DVD's, and books-on-tape. In addition, the Library conducts numerous programs for community members of all ages and interests, ranging from story hours and summer reading programs for children, to literacy tutoring for adults, to technology training for seniors or others who may be using the Internet and e-mail for the first time, and open houses for the entire community.

With a growing collection in a wide variety of information formats and a diverse array of community programs, the San Leandro Library continues to fulfill its proud legacy of service to the community: *striving to meet the information, education, and entertainment needs of every San Leandro resident.*

San Leandro is Growing and Changing

In recent years, however, the community of San Leandro has been growing and changing. The population has grown from 68,698 residents in 1970 to 79,452 today, an increase of 16% since the three existing branches were first opened and the closure of Eastshore branch due to decline in state funding. San Leandro's population has also been growing more culturally diverse in the past decade. In addition, an increasing number of younger families have moved to San Leandro during the 1990's and the city has seen several new residential developments built throughout the city during recent years.

Each of these trends is expected to continue to impact the San Leandro Library into the future. For example, San Leandro's population is expected to grow by over 6,500 people by 2020, representing an additional 8% increase over the number of people the Library serves today.

Existing Branches Are Unable to Meet Today's Needs

Despite the best efforts of Library staff and the patience of branch library customers, the population growth and demographic changes occurring in San Leandro have limited the Library's ability to provide superior library services in the existing neighborhood branches. For example, the recent growth in population has meant that the Library is serving more people than ever,

Today's San Leandro Library continues to fulfill its proud legacy of service to the community: striving to meet the information, educational, and entertainment needs of every San Leandro resident.



Library programs that serve the needs of the entire community

San Leandro's population has grown 16% since the three existing branches were first opened...and by 2020 the population is expected to increase an additional 8% over the number of people the Library serves today.



Existing branches weren't designed for the new services that customers expect of modern libraries.

INTRODUCTION

The changing places and faces of San Leandro present the Library with numerous challenges in its continuing effort to provide superior library services at the existing neighborhood branches.



Mulford-Marina Branch Library
2,000 sf



Manor Branch Library
2,100 sf



South Branch Library
1,100 sf

leading to frustration from branch customers over a lack of seating, not enough computers, and inadequate space for community programs. Furthermore, increasing cultural diversity in San Leandro has meant that Library customers often request a wider variety of materials than can be provided at the neighborhood branches due to space constraints. In addition, much of the new residential development and population growth in San Leandro has occurred in areas that are not well served by the three existing branches, leaving many community members without reasonably convenient access to a branch library in their neighborhood (the closure of the Eastshore-West Davis Library Branch has exacerbated this problem).

Clearly, the changing places and faces of San Leandro present the Library with numerous challenges in its continuing effort to provide superior library services to San Leandro residents at the existing neighborhood branches. To put it simply, the Library's existing branch facilities are no longer meeting all the needs for library services in the neighborhoods the branches were meant to serve. This is true for the following reasons:

- *All three of the existing branches are too small to be able to adequately serve the growing and more diverse population in their neighborhood service areas.*
- *The existing branch libraries were not designed to support the new kinds of services and programs that the community expects of modern libraries.*
- *The existing branches have crowded work spaces and public spaces which limits the ability of library staff to effectively deliver the highest quality services, materials, and programs to customers.*
- *The size and location of the three existing neighborhood branches means that some community members do not have reasonable access to library services, either because there is no branch nearby or because recent growth has overwhelmed the existing branch.*

In addition, the functionality of many of the existing branch library facilities is further compromised due to issues relating to the Americans with Disabilities Act, energy efficiency standards, and other building and planning code requirements that need to be addressed.

A Changing Community Needs a Changing Library

Because of recent population growth, shifting demographics, new development projects, and growing concerns over the size, age and location of the existing neighborhood branches, City and Library leadership decided to undertake a thorough study of the strengths and needs of the current branch library system in order to determine how the neighborhood branches' services and facilities could be improved to better meet the changing needs of San Leandro residents. The goals of the study were three-fold:

INTRODUCTION

- **Identify the branches' existing strengths as well as opportunities for improved service.** *Build on the strengths of the existing branches while expanding their mission to provide enhanced neighborhood services.*
- **Ensure that ALL the residents of San Leandro have reasonably convenient access to quality library services.** *Bring a full range of both traditional and modern library services to all people in every San Leandro neighborhood.*
- **Explore how existing and proposed branches can expand their role as 'neighborhood civic places.'** *Expand the existing branches civic presence in San Leandro's neighborhoods and provide places for residents to access community services in their local neighborhoods.*

Planning For Today and Tomorrow

In order to develop strategies for achieving the study goals and to plan for future library improvements, the City, the Library, and the consultant team undertook a comprehensive community-based planning process. This process consisted of several components, including:

- *An evaluation and analysis of existing branch library service, programs, and facilities.*
- *A needs assessment which compared existing branch library services and facilities with community needs through the year 2020 (based on future population growth and demographics, current library use patterns, appropriate collection sizes, and space needs in modern libraries).*
- *An evaluation and analysis of potential branch library sites and the formulation of site development strategies for new and improved library facilities (along with corresponding implementation schedules and estimated project costs).*
- *Extensive community participation from nearly two hundred library customers, library staff, and community leaders, including:*
 - *116 library patrons surveyed, with face-to-face interviews of 49 of these patrons*
 - *Mapping the library usage patterns of 100 of the surveyed patrons*
 - *3 focus groups and 1 public workshop attended by over 42 San Leandro residents and community leaders with 32 additional surveys completed by these attendees*
 - *4 staff interview sessions with library staff from the Main Library and each of the 3 branches*

The purpose of this Branch Libraries Study was to determine how the neighborhood branch system could be improved to better meet the changing needs of San Leandro residents.



A functional analysis of each branch was conducted as part of the Study.



Input from library customers and staff was the foundation of the planning process.

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This Study recommends strategies for the Library and its community partners to pursue in order to best meet the current and future needs for library services in San Leandro.

Strategies for Meeting Current and Future Needs

This document, the *San Leandro Branch Libraries Study*, is the result of the comprehensive planning process described above. The *Study* makes recommendations for meeting the need for branch library services and facilities through the year 2020 in every San Leandro neighborhood. To put it another way, this *Study* recommends strategies for the Library and its community partners to pursue in order to best meet the current and future needs for library services in San Leandro.

How this *Branch Libraries Study* document is Structured

The *Branch Libraries Study* is divided into seven sections:

Introduction: *the need for and objectives of the Study.*

The Need: *evaluation of existing library services and facilities at each branch.*

The Recommendation: *description of recommended improvements to existing branch library services and site development strategies for new and upgraded library branches in order to meet both immediate and future needs.*

Implementation: *discussion of project phasing, estimated project costs, funding strategies, and next steps.*

Community Participation: *overview of the planning process and community feedback that was used to develop the Study.*

Branch Summaries: *profiles of the specific opportunities and challenges at each of the 3 existing branch libraries and a future fourth branch.*

Appendix: *acknowledgements, listing of community members and resources consulted during the planning process, detailed summaries of findings from patron interviews and surveys, and costs analysis of the Branch Libraries Study recommendations.*

Summary of Study Recommendations

Based on the evaluation of existing conditions, analysis of future trends, and review of the public input received during the planning process, the consultant team worked with Library management, the Department of Engineering, and the Library/Historical Commission to develop recommendations for meeting the community's needs. These recommendations are summarized below:

- ***Build on the strengths of the current Library system, including the new Main Library downtown, highly-accessible 'neighborhood-***

serving' branches, and a high level of personalized customer service and assistance, especially at these branches.

- ***Modernize and expand the role of the branch libraries in the community in order to meet customers' expectations for new services while enhancing and complementing existing services.***
- ***Develop and implement a new service-delivery model in order to improve customers' access to services while controlling Operation & Maintenance costs.***
- ***Expand and improve the three existing branches and build one new branch:***
 - *Upgraded South Branch*
 - *Upgraded Mulford-Marina Branch*
 - *Upgraded Manor Branch (a 'Neighborhood Plus branch')*
 - *New branch in Eastshore-West Davis*

These recommendations were tailored to meet the specific needs of each of the neighborhood areas the Library serves. At the same time, the recommendations were formulated within a 'big picture' framework in order to bring library services throughout the city up to parity in a strategic and coordinated way. Finally, the recommendations are intended to be flexible so that the Library and its community partners can respond to emerging opportunities and changing circumstances over time.

How the *Branch Libraries Study* will be Used

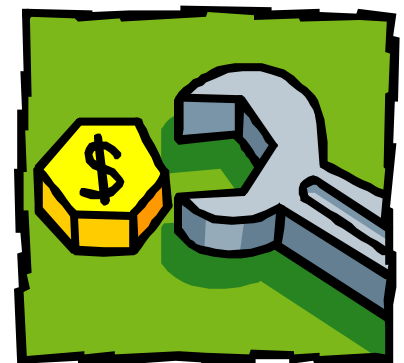
This *Branch Libraries Study* will be used in three different ways: a) to help the City and Library improve branch library services and facilities, b) to help City and Library leadership identify and secure funding for new and improved branch library facilities, and c) to help Library staff and customers evaluate the progress being made towards meeting the need for expanded library services in San Leandro neighborhoods.

A. Working Together to Improve Library Services and Facilities

The *Branch Libraries Study* will serve as a guide to help the Library and its community partners work collaboratively to improve branch library facilities and services over the next 20 years. The *Branch Libraries Study* will need to be updated as necessary to respond to emerging opportunities and changing circumstances that may occur in the future.

B. Securing Funding for New and Improved Libraries

The *Branch Libraries Study* will help City and Library leadership identify and secure the funding to construct new facilities or to expand existing facilities in their communities. For example, the *Branch Libraries Study* will be a critical piece of evidence for jurisdictions applying for Proposition 14 grant funding. This statewide library bond measure was approved by voters



This *Study* can help the City and the Library secure funds for new & improved branch libraries.

INTRODUCTION

on March 7, 2000 and can potentially provide up to 65% of the funds needed for the construction, renovation and/or expansion of library facilities. It is assumed that those jurisdictions that present the most compelling documentation of the need for additional library facilities in their communities will be well-positioned in the competition for the \$350,000,000 in Proposition 14 monies.

C. Evaluating the Progress Being Made

The *Branch Libraries Study* will allow Library staff and customers to monitor the progress that the City and Library are making in meeting the community needs for expanded library services in San Leandro's neighborhoods - both today and in the decades to come.

San Leandro Branch Libraries Are In Need

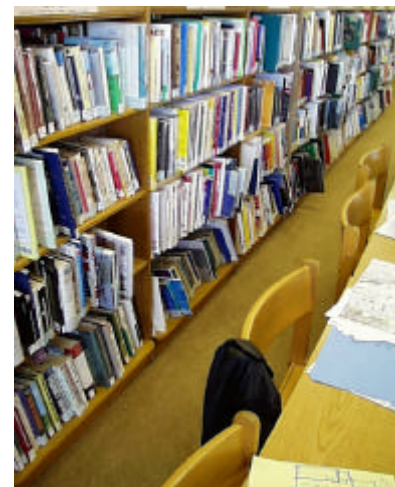
Currently, every San Leandro branch library is unable to meet the existing customer demand for library services. For example, in neighborhoods like Eastshore-West Davis where there is no branch library nearby, library customers often have difficulty just getting to the nearest library due to traffic, lack of parking, limited transit access, or a long walking or biking distance. Once customers arrive their branch library, they often discover they are unable to find a place to sit and read, and that chairs that are available will likely be right next to a boisterous children's storyhour or a lively group of teenagers doing homework. When customers browse the stacks at their branch library, they notice that many of the shelves are so crowded that materials must be placed too low or too high to be easily accessed and that many materials are out of date. Even when customers just want to use their branch library to do online research, they often encounter a lengthy wait for a very limited number of computers. They may also find that the book, video, or compact disc they wanted is already checked out.

Judging from feedback received from branch library customers and staff during this study, an increasing number of people are having library experiences like the ones described above. Most San Leandro neighborhoods have "outgrown" their existing branch libraries and are now making do with branch facilities that are in many ways inadequate to meet residents' needs. And if *today's needs* cannot be adequately met within existing branch facilities, how will the Library meet increasing *future demand* for library services as San Leandro's population continues to grow larger and more diverse? Simply put, ***the Library's ability to provide superior library services to San Leandro neighborhoods will be severely hampered in the coming decades if existing branch library facilities are not upgraded and new branch facilities are not built.***

The Need for New & Upgraded Branch Facilities Is Real

How did the need for new and improved branch library facilities in San Leandro neighborhoods become so great? One reason is that recent population growth has led to increasing demand for library services in San Leandro. The population of San Leandro has grown steadily in recent years to over 79,452 residents – an increase of 16% since the three existing branches were first opened. The population of San Leandro is also becoming more culturally diverse, with an increasing number of residents who speak languages other than English. In addition, more young households have moved to San Leandro in the past decade and will continue to do so into the foreseeable future. Further, several new residential developments have been built throughout the city during the 1990's.

This growing, more diverse population has meant increased demand in recent years for both traditional library services as well as for new kinds of library services. Population growth and the demand for new services such as Internet access has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of people



Manor Branch Library

"Children sometimes go to do homework and the kids don't have enough room to sit [anywhere]."

–Manor Branch Library Patron

San Leandro neighborhoods have simply "outgrown" their existing branch library facilities.

THE NEED

The renovation of the Main Library, coupled with a growing, more diverse population have meant a substantial increase in the number of people visiting library facilities in the past 10 years.



Mulford-Marina Branch

Even with the Main Library, there is not enough space in the branch library facilities to accommodate any additional library materials or services – or the increasing number of people who will want and need to use the branch libraries.

visiting the library citywide in the past 10 years. This increase in customer visits has occurred while the Library has tried to meet the increasing demand for library services with limited operating budgets after the downturn of the early 1990's.

Thanks to the support of San Leandro residents, the Main Library just underwent a major renovation which will help to meet some of the growing demand for library services in San Leandro. But while the Main Library is a wonderful community asset for meeting *citywide service needs*, it was never intended nor can it be expected to fully meet *local service needs (i.e., services tailored to the unique needs of each neighborhood service area that are conveniently accessible at the neighborhood level)*. Throughout the planning process, many branch library customers noted that while they utilized the improved services offered at the new Main Library, they also wanted and needed to be able to access a fuller spectrum of library services in their own neighborhoods. This is especially true for seniors and school-age children who are often less able to travel downtown to access the many library services offered at the Main Library which cannot be offered at their local branch library in their own neighborhood due to inadequate facilities.

More Customers and Materials in the Same Amount of Space

More visitors to the branch libraries, more collection materials and new kinds of library uses and expectations have stretched the library space available at San Leandro's branch libraries to the breaking point. The construction of the new Main Library added more library space to the citywide total and allowed the Library to offer expanded library services and programs at this facility. But the amount of library space available at the branch libraries for residents of the neighborhood service areas remains substantially less than the amount that is currently needed. Some indicators of the need for more branch library space – in *every* San Leandro neighborhood – include the following:

- *Expanded collections and added services with more residents in the same limited amount of space means that the space for people and books is increasingly crowded.*
- *Fewer seats are available for customer use as more space has been set aside for shelving.*
- *Books and other materials that are still useful are withdrawn from the branch collections (or must be placed either too high or too low on the shelf to be easily accessible) simply to make room for new titles as they arrive.*

- *Incompatible uses must compete for the same space, leading to excessive noise throughout the small branch libraries (which occurs when toddlers participate in storytelling programs or groups of students work on collaborative homework assignments in the same space in which other users are trying to quietly read or do research).*
- *Designated, appropriate spaces for tutoring, help with homework or small group study are not available, even though these are service priorities for the San Leandro Library.*
- *A shortage of computers for public use often results in long wait times for computer use or Internet access, but the number of computers that can be added is limited both by the lack of adequate data/electrical cabling in the branch facilities and by a lack of space.*

All Branch Library Users are Negatively Affected

San Leandro branch libraries offer a variety of services and programs to meet the diverse needs of the communities they serve: from providing access to books and other print materials to providing access to the Internet; from offering literacy programs to offering technology training classes. As the preceding examples illustrate, inadequate branch library facilities in San Leandro limits neighborhood residents' ability to take full advantage of library services. In such an environment, *all* groups of library users are negatively affected:

- *Students from the elementary grades through high school are deprived of quiet group study spaces as well as access to computers for research.*
- *Young children are deprived of the opportunity to discover the joy of reading.*
- *People of all ages are deprived of opportunities to find a quiet space to read and reflect.*
- *Immigrants and new arrivals are deprived of opportunities to learn about their new culture, study its language, and to appreciate their own heritage and culture.*
- *Families are deprived of opportunities to find books and other materials they can enjoy together.*
- *The entire community is deprived of a civic gathering place that could be a source of neighborhood identity and pride.*

Experiences such as these are not just isolated individual inconveniences – they may actually cause some customers to stop using the library altogether.

Inadequate branch facilities prevent neighborhood residents from taking full advantage of the Library services.



South Branch

When neighborhood residents can't conveniently access the library services they want and need, the entire community suffers.

THE NEED

The Branches' Service Area Boundaries

A branch library's service area is the surrounding geographic area that the library serves; a library is responsible for providing services to the population that lives in this area. While the service area boundaries have not changed much, the population in these areas, through growth from young families migrating in or infilled development projects, has resulted in the number of people living in many of these service areas being larger than the existing branch facilities can serve. In addition, these service areas don't reflect the closure of the Eastshore Branch or growth in traffic congestion that has occurred in the past few decades. Consequently, there are pockets in San Leandro communities that don't have practical access to library services due to travel distance or other access barriers.

Future Growth will only Increase Demand at Branch Libraries

The inability of existing branch facilities to meet the current demand for library services is essentially the result of population growth and the need for added services. The existing branch libraries were built in the 1970s to serve neighborhood service area populations that are smaller than those same neighborhoods are today. But if existing branch facilities have been unable to keep pace with the population growth and demographic changes that have occurred in recent years, they will be further ill-equipped to accommodate the population growth that is anticipated in San Leandro during the next 20 years. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) has projected that the population of San Leandro will increase an additional 8% by the year 2020 to at least 86,600 residents.

The Association of Bay Area Governments has projected that the population of San Leandro will increase an additional 8% by the year 2020 to 86,000 residents.

As demand for services at the local branches has grown in recent years, it is only the hard work and creativity of library staff and volunteers that has allowed the Library to bridge the gap – squeezing more books on already crowded shelves, and fitting more chairs into already crowded reading rooms. But as this demand continues to grow in the years to come, the need simply cannot be met through dedication alone – the Library will need more branch library space at the neighborhood level. ***There is simply not enough space in the existing library facilities for all the additional books, chairs, computers, and group study and meeting rooms that will be needed.*** By every recognized measure of library space needs (including square feet per capita, collection size, and seating capacity), the Library's existing branch facilities have only one-half to two-thirds of the amount of space that is needed to provide quality library service both today and in the coming years.

Won't the Internet Decrease the Need for Branch Libraries?

Many people have wondered whether the emergence of the Internet and the spread of home computers will reduce the need for “brick and mortar” branch libraries in the future. In fact, recent trends indicate the very opposite to be true. *By providing access to the Internet, proprietary databases, and other computing resources, San Leandro branch libraries are attracting new customers and seeing regular customers visiting more often and staying longer.* This is true for a number of reasons. First, because the cost of new technologies is often beyond the financial means of many community members, the Library may provide some people with their only opportunity to access the Internet or use other computer resources. The Library thereby serves a vital role in bridging the “digital divide” that exists for many people. In addition, some San Leandro residents use the digital resources at their branch libraries because they know they can call upon library staff for assistance. As a result, San Leandro Library staff often serve as “digital ambassadors” to the neighborhoods they serve, from the “latchkey kid” who wants to do online research for a science project to the senior citizen sending her first e-mail to a grandchild. The digital revolution has not made San Leandro libraries obsolete but instead has secured the continued importance of the Main and branch libraries as *information service providers* and *learning destinations* that offer *equal access* to every San Leandro resident.

The Need Has Been Documented and Confirmed

The input of library customers and staff was critical in documenting the need for new and improved library facilities in San Leandro. This anecdotal evidence was further confirmed by a thorough functional and technical analysis of each branch library facility in San Leandro.

A. The Input of Library Customers and Staff

No one knows better than library customers and staff how great the need is for new and improved branch library facilities in San Leandro. In numerous surveys and public meetings undertaken as part of this planning process, San Leandro Library customers repeatedly identified problems with existing branch facilities that limited their ability to access the services they needed. To cite just two such comments, a customer of the Mulford-Marina Branch noted that “the branches do not have enough computers, and no computer tutoring” while a customer of the Manor Branch noted that “we can never get books for book reports...the selection [of materials] is not large.” (Additional comments are included in the *Community Participation* and *Branch Summaries* chapters of this *Study*). In addition, library staff who participated in several group interview sessions identified numerous deficiencies with existing branch library facilities that prevented them from effectively delivering library services to the public, such as poorly configured service areas and crowded work spaces. Indeed, the project team heard from hundreds of library customers, staff, and community leaders and one theme consistently emerged: *‘We need better library facilities in our communities!’*



Computer lab at the Main Library

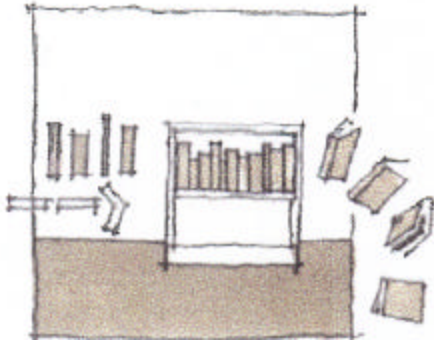
The digital revolution has not made libraries obsolete but has instead secured the library's continued importance as an information services center and learning destination for the entire community.



Gathering input from stakeholders

In hearing from hundreds of library customers, staff, and community leaders, one theme consistently emerged: ‘We need better branch library facilities in our communities!’

THE NEED



Functional problems at many of the Library's existing branch facilities impacts services and programs currently being offered and hampers the Library's efforts to introduce new services and programs.

B. The Functional Analysis

The functional analysis evaluated each branch library according to how well the existing facility “worked” for customers and staff. The project team examined each existing branch facility, observed how customers and staff were using the branch, and noted any functional problems that interfered with library services and programs, such as poor layout, acoustics or lighting, a shortage of seats or computers, crowding or long lines at service areas, or the library's location. Some of the functional problems found at the Manor Branch Library (and illustrated in the exhibit on the next page) were representative of the problems at other San Leandro Library branch facilities:

- *Lack of shelf space limits the collection and results in materials placed too high and too low on the shelf.*
- *Absence of dedicated spaces for group uses results in excessive noise in public areas when incompatible uses don't have their own spaces.*
- *There are not enough computers for community and students' use.*

As the functional analyses of each of the Library's branch facilities demonstrated, ***the functional limitations of many existing facilities means that these facilities do not adequately support services and programs currently being provided.*** A prime example of how the branch facilities' functional limitations impede the ability of the Library to provide adequate services to the community can be found at the South Branch. Because there is no dedicated storytelling space at this extremely small facility, even basic, traditional library programs such as children's storytelling simply cannot be provided.

In addition, ***functional limitations of many of the Library's existing facilities have hampered the introduction of new services and programs.*** For example, providing computer access and technology training has been a challenge in all of the branch facilities due to lack of space and insufficient data and electrical cabling, most notably at the Manor Branch. In fact, insufficient cabling, lack of space, and/or a poor layout has limited the number of general purpose computers that can be placed at many of the Library's branch facilities and has prevented needed computer training labs from being placed in any of the facilities.

Finally, ***the functionality of the Library's branch facilities is further compromised when these facilities are difficult to access for people with limited mobility.*** For example, young people and seniors are two of the primary user groups of San Leandro branch libraries, but the mobility of these two groups is often limited. When a library branch cannot adequately serve the less mobile customers in its neighborhood service area, then that branch can no longer be considered fully functional.

MANOR BRANCH LIBRARY



seating



- There is not enough seating to accommodate community needs.
- Group work tables.



shelving



- Shelving at capacity.
- Lack of shelving limits collection and display.
- Lack of shelving for media.



technology



- Computers insufficient to serve community and student's needs.
- No copier for staff or public use.

Functional analysis of the Manor Branch Libraries illustrating functional problems similar to those found at other San Leandro branch libraries.

C. The Facilities Analysis

The facilities analysis documented the physical condition of each of the Library's existing branch facilities, including the building's exterior and interior condition, the general condition of building (mechanical and electrical) systems, and general compliance with building code and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. This facilities analysis found that, although the buildings are all well maintained, all of the branch facilities are seriously deficient in size and do not meet current standards for public facilities as a result of size and age (and original construction as residential structures). These facilities continue to age, they will become increasingly inadequate in meeting both the growing demand for traditional library services and the new expectations placed on modern libraries. The findings of the facilities analysis are more fully documented in the *Branch Libraries Technical Report*.

Summary of the Need at each Branch Library

Despite the best efforts of Library staff and the patience of customers, existing branch facilities are in many ways inadequate to meet the needs of today or tomorrow. The most pressing needs at each library facility are listed below:

- **Manor Branch Library:** *The facility is not ADA-compliant; shelving is at capacity which limits the size of the collection; there is not enough seating or computers for public use; there is no dedicated space for group study or storytelling which leads to noisy conditions; the staff work area is crowded which limits staff's ability to effectively serve customers.*
- **Mulford-Marina Branch Library:** *The facility's layout does not meet ADA requirements; there are not enough seats or computers for customer use; the facility's small size results in a severe shortage of tables for research or studying; the lack of separation of group uses and programs results in excessive noise; shelf space is constrained; inadequate library storage space results in storage and clutter in public areas.*
- **South Branch Library:** *The facility's extremely small size and lack of dedicated spaces for group study, storytelling or other programs results in crowded conditions and excessive noise; there is not enough seating, tables or computers for public use; the facility is not ADA-compliant and there is no public restroom; crowded staff work areas prevent staff from adequately serving customers.*
- **Eastshore-West Davis:** *Because of the closure of the branch facility in this neighborhood service area, residents do not have convenient access to library services. The critical facility issue here is that there is no facility at all.*

Guidelines to Meet Current and Future Needs

This *Branch Library Study* recommends that the library service level guidelines discussed below be used as *benchmarks* to help the Library and its community partners meet the current and future demand for library services in San Leandro. These guidelines were developed for each of the service components required in a modern, functional branch library: books and other materials, chairs, computers, storytelling space, community meeting rooms, group study rooms, and adequate parking. These guidelines are not intended to be a “one-size-fits-all” solution. Rather, they are intended to serve as a flexible tool for the Library and its community partners to use in order to determine the best mix of library services needed in each of the unique neighborhood service areas. For example, neighborhood service areas with a large student population may need more group study space in their branch library. Likewise, neighborhood areas without adequate venues for community meetings may want their branch library to have a large community room that will support both library programs and community events.

By following the recommended service level guidelines, the Library will be able to provide more branch library space citywide which will enable it to meet both current and future needs for locally accessible library services in the growing and ever more diverse neighborhoods of San Leandro. This additional space is needed to accommodate:

- *More people visiting the branch libraries because of population growth and the addition of new services.*
- *Changes in the needs and expectation of library customers.*
- *Flexibility to adapt to changing service and program needs.*
- *Larger collections that address a broader range of interests.*
- *More copies of commonly used library materials.*
- *More tables and chairs at which customers can read and study.*
- *More public access computers for general use and technology training.*
- *Rapid advances in technology hardware and media formats.*
- *Larger storytelling spaces.*
- *More community meeting rooms and group study rooms.*
- *More parking spaces.*
- *Adequate space for staff to be able to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently.*

These guidelines are not intended to be a “one-size-fits-all” solution. Rather, they are intended to serve as flexible benchmarks to help the Library and its community partners determine the best mix of library services needed in each neighborhood service area.



Crowding at South Branch

THE NEED

New and upgraded branch libraries are needed soon in order to continue providing superior, accessible library services to San Leandro residents.

Unfortunately, the Library's existing branch facilities are too small to accommodate the additional services that are needed to meet current and future demand. Even if there was enough room in these facilities, each of the Library's existing branch facilities has significant functional problems and some are experiencing physical aging as well. In addition, there are some areas within the existing neighborhood service areas – such as Eastshore West Davis – where residents have difficulty accessing services at the nearest branch library because of the long distance to the nearest facility of other transportation barriers. By any measurement, new and improved branch library facilities will be needed soon in order to continue providing superior library services to the residents of San Leandro neighborhoods.

Recommended Service Level Guidelines

The recommended service level guidelines for each branch library were calculated to meet the needs of the branches' 2020 "service population" (i.e., the number of people living in the areas that the library branch will serve by the year 2020). The combined "service population" of each of the branches has is expected to be 55,500 by the year 2020. The guidelines are based on service level indicators that were first developed by American library facility planners approximately fifty years ago. Since then, they have been refined and updated to reflect changing library services needs.

The recommended service level guidelines contained in this Facilities Master Plan are based on indicators that were first developed by library planners fifty years ago and have since been refined and updated to reflect changing library services needs.

Linked originally to libraries in the United States that were considered successful in serving their communities, the service level guidelines recommend planning targets for collection size, seating capacity, amount of programming and meeting room space as well as an overall recommendation for the amount of library square footage for every person in the population served by a given library. Each of these targets assumes that, to successfully meet its community's needs, certain ratios must be maintained between the population served and the amount of material or seating or space available to that community.

For example, a given library's collection of books, magazines, and audiovisual materials needs to be large enough for library customers to successfully find something to read, listen to or view at least 66% to 70% of the time; and customers should be able to successfully request the item they want from another library or successfully reserve the item from their home library the rest of the time. In general, a library collection should contain approximately 2.5 volumes per capita, with a well maintained and up to date collection on a diverse range of topics and formats, in order to provide adequate library services. This ratio needs to be higher in communities with large numbers of school age children or a community with a substantial population of non-English speakers.

Similarly, the seating capacity at each branch library should correspond to the size of that library's service population. Generally, the larger the service population, the lower the ratio of seats to population required in order to provide an adequate number of seats for library customers to use. Public libraries that serve populations similar in size to most San Leandro neighborhood service areas should meet the recognized library planning guideline of 3 to 4 seats per 1,000 population served. However, smaller neighborhood service areas like Mulford-Marina need a somewhat higher ratio of seats to service population to ensure that a baseline level of seating is provided in these smaller service areas.

The square footage per capita guideline represents the total amount of space required to house each of the library service components: collection size, seating, programming and meeting room space, computers and other equipment, service desks, staff work space, and storage needs. Public libraries that serve communities that are similar in population size and demographics to those in San Leandro *and* that offer the full spectrum of print, programming, and electronic services need approximately 0.7 to 0.9 square feet per capita overall to meet the demand for library services citywide.

A. Improved Book and Audiovisual Collections:

Current library planning guideline:

2.5-3.5 volumes for every resident or

Minimum of 20,000 volumes per facility

Enhanced guidelines to meet the needs of San Leandro:

3.4 volumes for every resident

Branch libraries need to offer a range of books and other types of materials that meet the needs and interests of people of all ages, from toddlers to seniors. The collection needs to be broad enough to offer a variety of materials to customers from a variety of cultural groups and large enough to offer multiple copies of popular titles that are in high-demand. San Leandro Library's collection of books and audiovisual media has been growing in size and diversity in recent years. The Library is currently building the collection of the Main Library with its newly expanded facility ***for a total of close to 243,700 volumes citywide planned to serve almost 80,000 residents. This represents an average of 2.8 volumes per capita.*** Unfortunately, the volumes available at the branch facilities is lower than that needed in order to provide a sufficient number of books and other materials to meet community needs. And because of the growing multicultural and multilingual population as well as the school age population served by the branch libraries in San Leandro, the number of volumes per capita should be higher than the current level of 2.8 volumes per capita.



Manor Branch

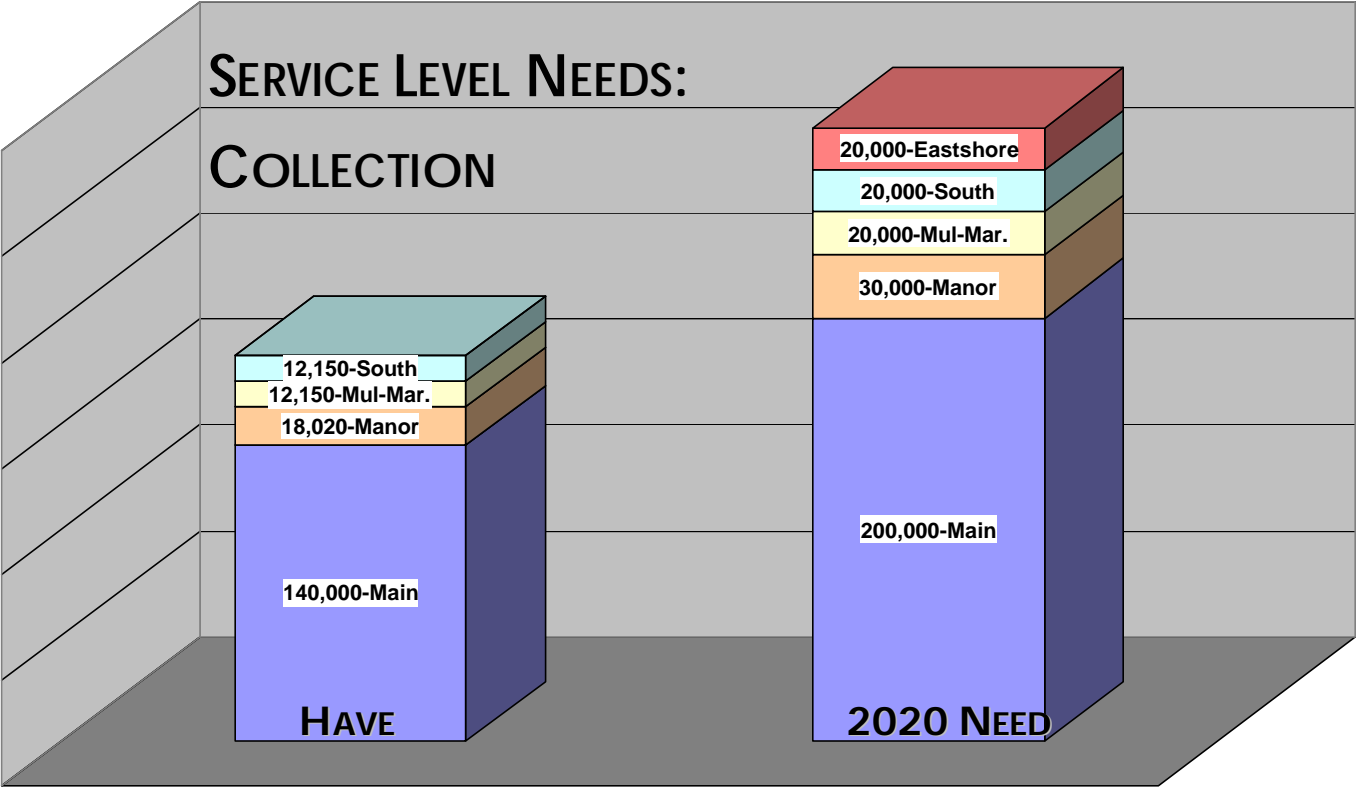
THE NEED

Collections Guideline
3.4 volumes per capita citywide

"Twenty-five percent of San Leandro patrons surveyed would use materials in another language if they were available."

This Branch Libraries Study recommends that by the year 2020, libraries in San Leandro have collections that reach 3.4 volumes per capita. This recommended guideline exceeds the most commonly used library planning guideline of 2.5 volumes per capita in order to meet the unique needs of San Leandro residents. These needs include a large school age population served by the branch libraries (especially Manor Branch), a growing number of residents whose primary language is not English, and many people who want and need information in audio or video formats. In addition, this level of service ensures that there will be more copies of materials on hand to support students' class assignments as well as copies of selected material in English and other languages to meet the needs of the City's multilingual residents. This level also includes sufficient audiovisual titles in various formats to serve the needs of people who speak limited English, people with learning differences, people with vision or hearing loss, and people of all ages who prefer to access information in audio or visual formats rather than in print.

As illustrated by the graph below, *these guidelines will allow the Library to add over 46,000 volumes to the citywide collection of books and audiovisual materials, bringing the total collection to nearly 300,000 volumes.* These guidelines translate into *nearly 20% more books and audiovisual materials citywide.* These additional materials will enable the every branch library to provide high-quality library services to all their customers and to respond to the unique needs of the individual neighborhood areas they serve.



THE NEED

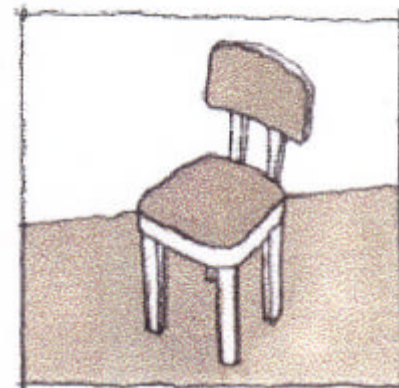
B. More Seats for Library Customers:

3.4 seats for every 1,000 residents

The majority of customers require a place to sit and an appropriate work surface to use when they come to their local San Leandro branch library, whether to read a book, work on homework assignments, do business-related research, or surf the Internet. On the customer satisfaction surveys that were administered as part of this planning process, many customers commented that they often had difficulty finding a place to sit when they visited their libraries, especially during peak use times.

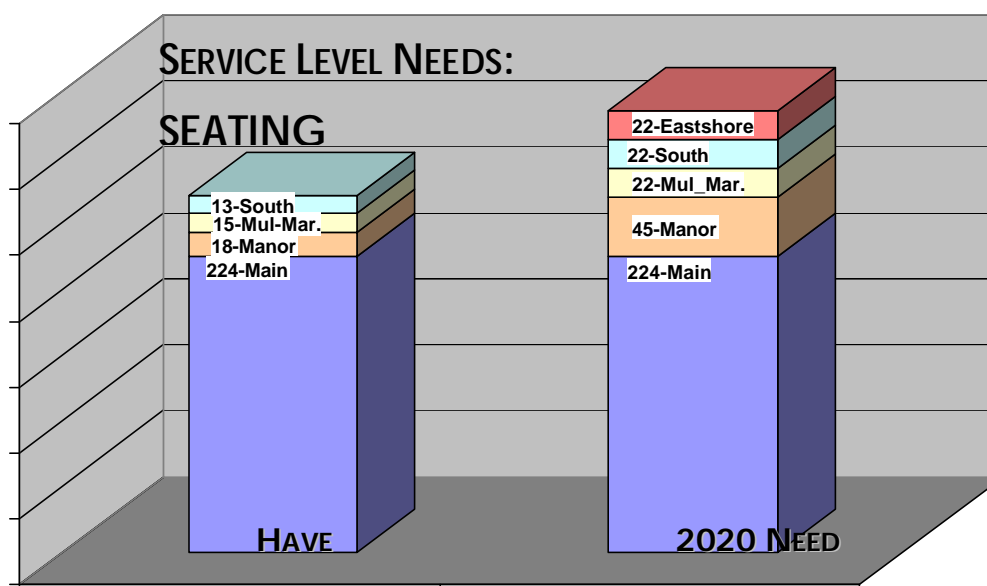
Currently there are only 46 “general purpose” seats in the Library’s 3 branch facilities. With the Main Library’s 224 seats this equals 3.1 seats for every 1,000 people in San Leandro. These “general purpose” seats include a variety of seating types, such as 4-person reader tables, single-person study carrels, and lounge seating, but do not include seats designated for computer use, storytelling, community rooms or group study rooms. The existing number of seats is far fewer than what is needed based on current library planning guidelines, which call for 3-4 general purpose seats per 1,000 people.

The Branch Library Study recommends that by the year 2020, the Library offer 3.4 general purpose seats per 1,000 people in the population. As illustrated by the graph below, these guidelines will enable the Library to add 65 general purpose seats to branch facilities, bringing the total number of seats to 335 citywide. This means that the Library will be able to ***add nearly 25% more seats citywide*** for community members to use. This guideline will also allow the Library to accommodate the unique seating needs of each of the neighborhood areas it serves.



Seating Guideline

3.4 general purpose seats per 1,000 people



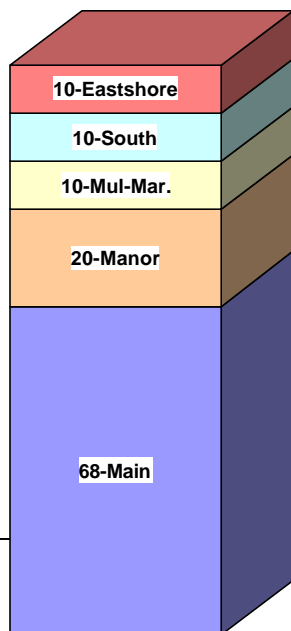
THE NEED



Computer Lab at the Main Library

Computer Guidelines

1.4 public access computer for every 1,000 people (with a minimum of 10 at each branch library)



SERVICE LEVEL NEEDS:
COMPUTERS BY 2020

C. Additional Public Computers and Technology Training

*1.4 public computer for every 1,000 residents
(with a minimum of 10 public computers in each branch library)
4 to 12 dedicated technology training computers at the Manor Branch to assist in serving students and other patrons*

While traditional library services continue to play a major role in modern libraries, the digital revolution that has taken place in recent years means that community members increasingly look to their local branch library for access and assistance with computers and other technology. People of all ages now come to the library to use a computer, check the Library's online catalog, search the Internet, send e-mail, consult an online reference source, use a word processing program, or use an educational game in the children's area.

The demand for publicly accessible computers and other digital resources is constant and ubiquitous. This demand is expected to remain high well into the foreseeable future for a number of reasons. First, the cost of computer hardware, software and Internet service is still prohibitive for many people. Even among those people who do have their own equipment, many do not have access to newer high speed computers or Internet service. In addition, the Library often plays a central role in introducing new technology to the community and offering opportunities for community members to expand and update their technological skills. By providing access to computers and training on new technology and electronic resources, the Library will continue to serve as the community's primary bridge across the "digital divide."

*Currently, the Library has 76 computers available to the public. Of these computer, only 11 are in the three existing branches. This is far less than what is necessary to meet the community need for adequate access to computers and for ongoing technology training. **This Branch Libraries Study recommends that by the year 2020, the Library provide 1.4 public access computer for every 1,000 people in the population – with a minimum of 10 such computers at each branch library – as well as 4 to 12 dedicated technology training computers at the Manor Branch to meet the additional role this Branch plays in supporting the surrounding schools. These guidelines will allow the Library to add a total of 42 computers at the branches, bringing the total number of computers available for public use to 118 citywide. These guidelines will allow the Library to increase the total number of computers available for public use at the Library's branch facilities by one-third and enable the Library to serve as the primary "community portal" into the information age for San Leandro residents.***

D. More Space for Children's Storytelling Programs:

25 seats in each branch library (or equivalent number of seats available for storytelling in multipurpose program room)

Storytelling programs introduce children to the joy and wonder of the written word and provide them with early exposure to language and literature that is generally considered critical for school readiness. Storytelling programs are often a library's most popular program and are an integral part of the services offered to children and their parents. Each branch facility needs a dedicated space in which to offer storytelling programs so that the noise associated with these activities won't interfere with other customers' use and enjoyment of the Library.

Storytelling Guidelines

Dedicated storytelling space for 25 children in each branch library (or the equivalent number of seats in a multi-purpose in program room)

This Branch Libraries Study recommends that by the year 2020, each of the branch libraries have a dedicated storytelling space with floor seating for up to 25 children (or the equivalent number of seats in a multi-purpose in program room). These guidelines will enable the Library to increase the seating space it is able to provide for storytelling from the current amount of seating for 35 children – all in the Main Library – to seating for 85 children. This translates into 243% more capacity for storytelling programs and ensures that every branch library will be able to meet the continuing demand for this invaluable service to families with young children without compromising their ability to provide services to other community members.

E. Additional Space for Community Meetings and Other Events

Up to 100 seats per facility

Many Library customers have come to view their local branch libraries as a center of civic and social life rather than just a repository of books and knowledge. In these neighborhoods, the branch library plays an important role as the "community commons" – a place for residents to come together for community meetings, workshops, and other events. Because these activities typically involve verbal communication and multimedia presentations for large groups of people, branch libraries in areas without reasonable access to other public meeting facilities should have a dedicated space for community meetings and similar programs so that such events do not conflict with other library uses. ***Currently, there are no dedicated meeting spaces in San Leandro Library branches.***

Community Room Guidelines

Up to 100 seats in each branch library